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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: FEBRUARY 04, 2010

SUMMARY: Coverage of the terrorist attack in Lower Dir that killed three U.S. soldiers dominated front pages in all newspapers on Thursday. Reports included official statements by the U.S. Embassy and Special Representative Holbrooke. Newspapers published the Taliban's statement claiming responsibility for the attack and alleging that the "Americans killed were members of the Blackwater group." The English daily, "The News," noted that the three American soldiers "were part of [a] 100-strong commando unit,...which has been training the Pakistani Frontier Corps." Reports of the conviction of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui also made front-page news, including a comment in the "The Nation" by Shireen Mizari blaming "the vindictive mindset of the U.S. public post-9/11" and "the Pakistani state and government" for its complicity in what she termed a "judicial farce." All newspapers highlighted remarks by the Director of U.S. National Intelligence Dennis Blair that "Al Qaeda is poised to attempt an attack on the United States within three to six months." Dailies also reported U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency director, Lt-Gen Ronald Burgess's statement expressing confidence in Pakistan's ability to safeguard its nuclear arsenal, "though vulnerabilities exist." General Petraeus's support for Pakistan's efforts to reach out to the Afghan Taliban also received wide coverage. Other morning headlines included Chief of Army Staff General Kayani's statement that the "ISI is not playing a double game in the war on terror," and reports that security forces killed 15 militants in Bajaur. Minister Counselor for Public Affairs, Larry Schwartz's address to information officers at the Public Service Academy also received coverage in Thursday's papers. End Summary.

#### TOP STORIES

News Story: Dir attack Kills U.S. Troops, Schoolgirls - "Dawn" (02/04)

"Three American soldiers were among eight people killed in a suicide attack in Lower Dir district on Wednesday. It is the first time U.S. soldiers have been killed in the tribal region, near the Afghan border, in an attack that drew attention towards a little-known program involving the U.S. army training Frontier Corps personnel, a senior security official said."

News Story: Pakistan And U.S. Condemn Bombing - "Dawn," "Jang," "Nawa-i-Waqt," "Express," "Khabrain," "Aaj-Kal," "Islam," "Ausaf," "Jinnah," "Pakistan," "Mashriq" (02/04)

"The Foreign Office (FO) and the U.S. on Wednesday condemned the attack in Lower Dir that killed three American soldiers, an FC personnel, four schoolgirls and another person. The White House said President Barack Obama condemned the attack that killed innocent schoolgirls. Meanwhile, a spokesman for the U.S. embassy in

Islamabad said the carnage 'shows the vision of the terrorists ... the U.S. and Pakistan are partners in fighting terrorism.' Separately, U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke also condemned the attack, and said the U.S. soldiers appeared not to have been directly targeted,' and denied Taliban charges they worked for Blackwater."

News Story: Taliban Claim Responsibility For Suicide Bombing: Dir Attack Kills U.S. Troops, Schoolgirls - "Dawn" (02/04)

"Three American soldiers were among eight people killed in a suicide attack in Lower Dir district on Wednesday.... According to AFP news agency, the Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack and alleged that the dead Americans belonged to U.S. security company Blackwater Worldwide, now known as Xe. Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan spokesman Azam Tariq said in a call from an unspecified place."

News Story: Killed Americans Were Part Of 100-Strong Commando Unit "The News" (02/04)

"The three U.S. soldiers who lost their lives on Wednesday in a school bombing incident in Dir Lower were members of the Army Special Forces, which has been training the Frontier Corps to improve its intelligence and combat tactics to effectively fight al-Qaeda and the Taliban insurgents in the Pak-Afghan tribal belt."

News Story: Jury Finds Aafia Guilty - "Dawn" (02/04)

"Aafia Siddiqui, the Pakistani neuroscientist, was found guilty of attempted murder charges on all seven counts listed in the complaint against her. She was tried on charges of trying to kill American soldiers in Afghanistan on July 28, 2008."

Comments: Cycle Of Injustice Complete, by Shireen M. Mazari - "The Nation" (02/04)

"The New York jury's decision finding Dr. Aafia guilty on seven charges did not really surprise anyone familiar with the vindictive mindset of the U.S. public post-9/11. Yet as the trial progressed, some hope seemed to appear since most of the crucial evidence against her proved false or confused. There were no fingerprints on the gun allegedly used on the U.S. soldiers for instance. Other accusations also proved inconsistent so one thought that perhaps the U.S. citizens on the jury would not show the bias and bigotry shown to so many Muslims in the U.S. post-9/11. But alas that was not to be. Despite serious doubts about the evidence - the most obvious one being her weak physical frame, which would never have allowed her to snatch the heavy gun and target the U.S. soldier -the jury convicted her. But the main issue is that the Pakistani state and government were complicit in this judicial farce."

News Story: Al Qaeda Attack On U.S. In Three To Six Months - "Dawn" (02/04)

"Al Qaeda is poised to attempt an attack on the United States within three to six months, America's top intelligence officials have warned Congress. The intelligence chiefs also warned that militant groups in Pakistan were coordinating their attacks with Al Qaeda, which had led to an increase in terrorist attacks inside Pakistan as well as rising concerns the groups might expand their ambitions to attack outside Pakistan. Director of U.S. National Intelligence Dennis C. Blair told the Senate Intelligence Committee that Al Qaeda and its affiliates had made it a high priority to attempt a large-scale attack on American soil."

News Story: Army Serious About Security - "Dawn," "Daily Times" (02/04)

"Pakistan's military knows there will be 'catastrophic consequences, primarily for Pakistan," if any of its nuclear bombs falls into the wrong hands, the top U.S. Intelligence Chief said on Wednesday. Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair's comments came one day after another top U.S. national security official told the Senate Intelligence Committee that 'vulnerabilities exist' in Pakistan's nuclear safeguards."

News Story: Pakistani N-Arsenal Safe But Vulnerable: U.S. - "Dawn" (02/04)

"The United States believes Pakistan can protect its nuclear weapons but vulnerabilities remain, according to the director of the U.S. Defence Intelligence Agency. Lt-Gen Ronald Burgess told the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee that the Pakistani government and the military establishment both came under repeated pressure from the Taliban extremists last year, including an attack on the army headquarters."

News Story: Petraeus Backs Pakistan's 'Constructive Involvement' - "Dawn," "Daily Times" (02/04)

"U.S. General David Petraeus voiced support for Pakistan's 'constructive involvement' in reaching out to Afghan Taliban to encourage reconciliation, saying its past ties to militants could prove helpful. But the head of U.S. Central Command, who is overseeing a surge of 30,000 additional U.S. forces into Afghanistan, cautioned in an interview that prospects for reconciliation among senior leaders were slight, at least for now."

News Story: ISI Not Playing Double Game: Kayani - "Daily Times" (02/04)

"Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Ashfaq Kayani has strongly rejected allegations that Pakistan's premier intelligence agency - the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) - is pursuing double standards in the war on terror, reported a private TV channel on Wednesday. Addressing senior journalists in Kakool, Gen. Kayani said that Pakistan Army had made more sacrifices than the coalition forces in the war on terrorism. He said Pakistan and the U.S. had 'different long-term goals' in Afghanistan."

News Story: Fifteen Militants Killed In Bajaur - "Dawn" (02/04)  
"Troops supported by planes and helicopter gunships mounted fresh attacks in Bajaur and killed 15 militants on Wednesday, sources said."

NRO Pakistan's Internal Issue: Larry Schwartz - "Express" (02/04)

"Larry Schwartz, the Public Affairs Officer of the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, has said that the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) is Pakistan's internal issue therefore he would not comment on it. He said that different institutions have different opinions regarding the NRO. Larry added that the United States wants to see democratic stability in Pakistan and would continue its full cooperation with the present government. He urged the Pakistani people to undertake the task of leveling global opinion about their country. Speaking to Information Officers at the Public Service Academy, the U.S. diplomat said that in the perspective of the future importance of Asia, it is the need of the hour that Pakistan be introduced as a powerful country."

#### TERRORISM/MILITARY ISSUES

News Story: U.S. Takes Torture Claims Seriously - "Dawn," "Daily Times" (02/04)

"The U.S. State Department has said it would raise with Islamabad the claim by five American nationals, apprehended last year in Sargodha, that they were tortured by Pakistani agencies. 'We take seriously all reports of abuse and torture and will raise such allegations with the government of Pakistan,' a statement issued by the department said."

News Story: Coalition Troops Brace For Biggest Offensive Since Start Of Afghan War - "Daily Times" (02/04)

"The U.S.-led coalition troops are planning their biggest joint offensive since the beginning of the Afghan war, officers said on Wednesday. They are aiming to target a town in the south of Afghanistan, which is not only considered a Taliban stronghold but also a hub of their lucrative opium trade. Due to security reasons, no exact date for the launch of the offensive has been released as yet but U.S. Commanders have said they plan to capture the town of Marjah, 380 miles southwest of Kabul during this winter."

News Story: NATO Planes Violate Pak Airspace - "The Nation" (02/04)

"The NATO fighter planes reportedly violated Pakistan's airspace for almost thirty minutes in the Zhob district, some 300 kilometers away from Quetta, on Pak-Afghan border on Wednesday, according to sources."

News Story: Govt. to Wipe Out Extremism: Qureshi - "The News" (02/04)

"Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi on Wednesday reaffirmed the government's commitment to wipe out the menace of extremism and terrorism from the country. He, however, said there is a need to win the hearts and minds of the people to completely overcome the menace."

News Story: Hakeemullah May Have Survived Drone Attack: Official - "Dawn" (02/04)

"A senior government functionary has told 'DawnNews' on condition of anonymity that Hakeemullah Mehsud may have survived a drone strike. The government has not officially confirmed the speculations about his death."

#### POLITICAL ISSUES

News Story: Senate Asked To Debate U.S. Strikes, Karachi Killings - "Dawn" (02/04)

"Two adjournment motions were submitted in the Senate on Wednesday, seeking debate on recent target killings in Karachi and Tuesday's U.S. drone strikes in North Waziristan. These were submitted by three Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) senators - Prof Khurshid Ahmad, Prof Mohammad Ibrahim Khan and Aafia Zia."

News Story: Kayani Spells Out Threat Posed By Indian Doctrine - "Dawn" (02/04)

"While the Pakistan Army is alert to and fighting the threat posed by militancy, it remains an "India-centric" institution and that reality will not change in any significant way until the Kashmir issue and water disputes are resolved, according to Army Chief Gen. Kayani."

#### ECONOMY/ENVIRONMENT

News Story: NGOs Allowed In Conflict Zones After Scrutiny - "Dawn" (02/04)

"The government has been issuing no-objection certificates to non-governmental organizations for working in conflict-affected districts after strict scrutiny to ensure that peace is maintained there, sources said. The sources said 65 NGOs were working in health, education, water and sanitation and other sectors in Swat. Most of these organizations, they said, had signed agreements with government departments for completion of certain projects over a period of time."

#### MISCELLANEOUS

News Story: Ahmadinejad To Visit Pakistan - "The News" (02/04)

"Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad will soon visit Pakistan to develop a joint action plan to boost bilateral ties and strengthen tripartite contracts with Afghanistan on security issues, Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki told visiting Pakistani journalists."

#### EDITORIALS/OPINIONS

Editorial: U.S. Furious On Pakistan's Refusal, an editorial in the Peshawar-based Urdu-language daily "Mashriq" (cir. 55,000) (02/04)

"On the one hand, the U.S. wants to politically engage the Afghan Taliban while, on the other, it has increased the frequency of drone attacks in North Waziristan which implies that Washington is working on an agenda to pitch the tribal people against the Pakistan Army, which has refused to open a new front in this area. This

contradiction in the U.S. policy casts doubts on the war against terrorism. Moreover, the U.S. has also refused to give drone technology to Pakistan and is using this weapon ungrudgingly against the innocent people of North Waziristan with an aim to increase pressure on Pakistan. The government needs to unequivocally ask the U.S. to stop these attacks."

Editorial: Death & Confusion, an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (02/04)

"The bomb blast that has killed at least nine people in Lower Dir and injured perhaps 100 others - most of them schoolgirls -- could be the first in what some security experts have warned may be retaliatory action following the possible death of Hakimullah Mehsud. Three foreign nationals were reported killed.... Tragic as the loss of young life is, we wonder why 'U.S. army trainers' were present at the inaugural ceremony of a girls' school that had apparently been built by our own armed forces after the previous school had been demolished. It may also be wondered how the terrorists were able to place their IED - reportedly of 70kg, a very large device.... It is obvious that the terrorists have no scruples about attacking schools or other soft targets even though they are aware that it is civilians who will die.... Continued bombings detract from the confidence of the public at large that the Taliban can be overcome."

Editorial: U.S. Drone Terrorism, an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (02/04)

"The U.S. is raining drones on Pakistani soil with a vengeance. On Tuesday alone the drones' death toll has reached 30.... The fallout for Pakistan is dreadful, Not only does it show that the Pakistani government is allowing its citizens to be killed by the U.S. on Pakistani territory, it also creates more recruits for the extremists and militants and makes the job of winning over the tribals so as to isolate the hardcore militants that much more difficult. It would appear that that is the U.S. insidious design against Pakistan, since they also know that such strikes not only add to the locals' resolve to fight the Americans, but they also undermine the credibility of the Pakistan military and the state.... So, if the U.S. is not prepared to accept our demand and stop violating our sovereignty with the drone attacks, then we need to demonstrate intent and will through actions."

Editorial: Planned Increase In U.S. Drone Attacks, an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (02/04)

"According to reports emanating from Washington, the new U.S. defence budget seeks more funds to enhance drone operations by 75%, citing its success in targeting militants in Afghanistan and Pakistan's tribal region.... Pakistan has repeatedly conveyed to Washington that these attacks amount to undermining the sovereignty of the country and these are counterproductive to the stated objective of winning hearts and minds of the people, which is necessary to achieve victory against war on terror. It is also strange that on the one hand the United States is directly or indirectly approaching Taliban for talks, facing domestic pressure for bringing back Marines and is engaged in finalizing an exit strategy but on the other hand it is planning to increase drone attacks which would increase temperature both in Afghanistan and Pakistan and mar chances for initiating any meaningful dialogue. Unfortunately, President Obama has become a lackluster leader and his policies are devoid of coherence and logic and these would lead the U.S. to nowhere."

Editorial: Has America Been Given A License To Kill?, an editorial in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (02/04)

"American drones fired 18 missiles at five places in North Waziristan killing 17 people and wounding many.... Pakistani rulers are demanding the American administration for halting the drone attacks, but to no avail. The administration has rather intensified the attacks. A better option for Pakistan is to start shooting down drones like the tribal people have done. This missile strikes campaign by America can be described as the target killing of Pakistanis and Pakistani President and the Prime Minister should

lodge a strong protest with America. A mysterious silence by the government of Pakistan and meek protest shows that the government has given a license to kill to America."

Opinion: Afghanistan: At A Turning Point, an op-ed by General (Retd) Mirza Aslam Beg in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (02/04)

"Obama announced the New Strategy for Afghanistan, and "has come to the determination through a series of deliberations, and getting a strategy for how to go forward in Afghanistan" with the intention 'to finish the job.' He has thus ordered a surge of 30,000 troops, increasing the total U.S. commitment to about 100,000, bolstered by 45,000 NATO troops.... On the face of it, this strategy is flawed, because the 30,000 troops surge will not help win the war. Rather, they would need 10 times more troops to achieve a semblance of success. Since they cannot afford such a large mobilization of troops, they can, at best maintain the no-win-situation, with 30,000 troops 'to hold the existing important population and communication centers, while the air power will be used to flush-out the Taliban.'... The United States of America and their allies are faced with a situation in Afghanistan, similar to the one the Soviets faced in 1989. Having suffered defeat, the Soviets asked for a safe exit, which was provided by the Mujahideen and the Pakistan government. Obama's new strategy in fact, is a veiled request for their safe exit. "It is a gamble. The price of victory will be high and the price of failure is incalculable" (Simon Tisdold)."

Opinion: Taliban Take On The U.State' Surge, an op-ed by Syed Saleem Shahzad in the Peshawar-based independent regional daily "The Statesman" (cir. 3,000) (02/04)

"In an effort to get the dialogue process back on track, the U.S. is considering the Taliban's demand on stopping the troop surge in Afghanistan, with the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan lined up to work out an arrangement that would keep the Taliban and al-Qaeda under control in any U.S. exit plan. Should the U.S. agree to the Taliban demands, there is no guarantee that the Taliban would stick to their word. This is the United States' dilemma."

Opinion: Sleeping With The Enemy, an op-ed by Farrukh Khan Pitafi in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (02/04)

"Those who advocate negotiating with the Taliban have actually been brainwashed by them and are still laboring under the delusion that somehow Pakistan can control Kabul through such groups. The only way Pakistan can play a role in today's Afghanistan is by winning the hearts of the Afghan people and not trying to impose rogues on them. Inclusion of the Taliban in the current administration will only be a ticking time bomb and will destroy the countries on both sides of the Durand Line. What else can we do then? It is clear that warfare is not solving everything. The Taliban are growing and the neo-conservatives in the U.S. are painting a doom and gloom scenario, especially because in the current situation they cannot make any capital - either political or financial - out of Afghanistan. They now want the Obama administration to commit a final and irredeemable mistake in Afghanistan so that he becomes totally marginalized."

Opinion: New Strategy For Afghanistan, an op-ed by Burhanuddin Hasan in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (02/04)

"Following many years of disastrous war with Taliban in which thousands of people were killed or injured and most of the country was laid waste, the Afghan President Hamid Karzai along with the U.S. and its NATO allies has finally reached the conclusion that the war is after all not winnable and the policy of reconciliation through dialogue with moderate factions of Taliban would be the best solution... Taliban have not so far shown any willingness in public for talks, but observers believe they are dead tired of fighting and might gladly accept the offer. The problem however is whether the die-hard followers of Osama will agree with moderate elements as expected by the Karzai government."

Opinion: Between Surge And Talks, an op-ed by Dr. Maleeha Lodhi in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000)

(02/04)

"The Taliban have been confronted with the challenge of the surge but with fighting yet to intensify. It is precisely because the Taliban feel that they are strong that they can be tempted to engage in the political process. As far as Pakistan is concerned, it has already signaled that it can play a role in mediating with the Taliban once there is clarity about how and when to proceed. The view that has prevailed for now is to wait until Washington has made up its mind and decided on a political framework for talks with the Taliban. The obvious question raised by this wait-and-see approach is how in the meantime Islamabad will deal with U.S. expectations of cooperation with its military escalation strategy, which is at odds with its role as an interlocutor with the Taliban. While daunting challenges lie ahead in resolving the tensions in the U.S.-led international effort in Afghanistan there is an important aspect of the evolving situation that has attracted little attention in the media."

Opinion: Striving To Matter, an op-ed by Mowahid Hussain Shah in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (02/04)

"An e-mail currently being circulated in the Washington metropolitan area lists the number of Indian Americans in key policy positions in the White House and elsewhere in the federal government.... India continues to seek an expanded platform. Its relative unease with Obama has not deterred India from nursing grander plans. It still continues to crave a permanent seat with veto power on the UN Security Council, a prospect which is dimmed because of India's contentious tussle with Pakistan over Kashmir. India also wants to be included in the area of responsibility of CENTCOM (the main US military command structure responsible for the U.S. military operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Persian Gulf) - a wish the U.S. is unlikely to accommodate for fear of antagonizing an already wary Pakistan."

Opinion: Aman Ki Asha: The Challenges Ahead, an op-ed by Muhammad Umer in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (02/04)

"While creating an environment conducive to talks is essential, it is equally important that conditions are created which will ensure any spoiler of peace efforts is brought to account. The two nations have had enough of the Musharrafs and the Kapoors. Peace constituencies in both countries will need to eventually become pressure groups with the capacity to tailor public opinion strong enough to guard against any attempt to derail the peace process once it is resumed. Galvanizing the people into action will be possible only through creating political awareness, which is the soul of any meaningful change in society. The role of the media simply cannot be denied in this respect."

Editorial: There Must Be Strict Measures Against Israel, an editorial in the liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (02/04)

"Israel has admitted that during last year's attacks on the Gaza Strip, citizens were targeted with white phosphorous shells. The Israeli government has reprimanded army officers responsible for these attacks. Until now, the Israeli army has denied violating regulations on the use of white phosphorous. Israel has violated international norms on war, as well as human rights countless times, and this has continued unabated because the international community has not taken note of these or taken action against Israel.... Just reprimanding soldiers responsible for such attacks is negligible penalty for such a major crime.... The need is to take effective measures that compel Israel to abide by international regulations, otherwise it would endanger the entire world, not just the Middle East."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)  
Patterson